

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

by **Stanislav Dimitrov Petkov,**

Professor, PhD, at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia, VUZF - Sofia

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for the academic position of '**Associate Professor**'

of Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia, VUZF - Sofia

in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

professional field 3.7. Administration and Management (Organizational Leadership and
Psychological Aspects of Management)

In the competition for 'Associate professor', announced in the State Gazette, issue 52 of 05.07.2022 and in the website of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia, as a candidate participates Dr. Victoria Svetlomirova Gatsova, lecturer at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By order № 370 of 10.11.2022 and order № 380 of 16.11.2022 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia I was appointed a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and Management (Organizational Leadership and Psychological Aspects of Management), announced by the Higher School of Insurance and Finance – Sofia (VUZF).

The only candidate for participation in the announced competition has submitted documents, namely Dr. Victoria Svetlomirowa Gatsova, lecturer at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia.

Presented by Dr. Victoria Gatsova set of materials on paper and in electronic form is in full compliance with the Regulations on the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia, and includes the following documents:

- CV in European format;
- a copy of the diploma for the educational and scientific degree "doctor" held;
- a monographic work with an abstract, reviewed by at least two qualified persons;
- list of publications after the defense of the doctoral dissertation and copies thereof;
- summaries in Bulgarian and English of the publications after the defense of the doctoral dissertation;
- medical certificate;
- criminal record certificate;
- certificate of the required experience;
- evidence of participation in scientific projects;
- a reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor";
- a reference to the original scientific contributions in the works and to the citations;

– consent form for the processing of personal data in connection with participation in the contest.

The documents presented by the candidate Victoria Gatsova are characterized by order, completeness and integrity.

On the basis of the presented documents and in particular of the presented autobiography, it can be concluded that the candidate Victoria Gatsova has significant experience in research and teaching.

I have personal impressions of the candidate, as a result of Dr. Victoria Gatsova's work at VUZF since 2014, successively as hon. teacher, academic secretary, assistant and dean of the Academic Program.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

The scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova can be assessed as very good, fully corresponding to the requirements of the current competition. In the current procedure for the competition for "Associate professor", Dr. Victoria Gatsova participates with the following seven works: one monograph - habilitation work; second monograph; a published book based on a defended dissertation work for the award of an educational and scientific degree "doctor", one study and three articles, which are sole work.

The publications of the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova have clear scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions.

From a content point of view, the monograph /habilitation thesis/ presented for the purposes of the competition is extremely interesting and up-to-date. The title of the monograph is "Occupational stress and counterproductive behavior in the organization". In the monograph, the author examines occupational stress and its relationship with counterproductive work behaviors. The topic chosen by the author is significant and relevant for modern organizations, since the dynamics of professional life create prerequisites for the occurrence of high levels of stress at the

workplace, which lead to a number of negative and dangerous consequences, such as counterproductive work behaviors.

The work has a volume of 159 pages and includes an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and a bibliographical reference. Three of the chapters are theoretical and the fourth is of an empirical nature.

The first chapter introduces the topic of stress as a general concept, after which the research focus turns to clarifying the nature of occupational stress and a thorough examination of the main stressors at work.

The main focus of the second chapter is the management of occupational stress. Both individual and organizational coping strategies are explored. To clarify the need to implement various stress management strategies in organizations, the chapter begins with a detailed presentation of the consequences of work stress, which affect both the individual employee and the organization and can lead to serious losses.

The focus of the third chapter is on counterproductive employee behavior. The essence of the studied construct is clarified, the types of counterproductive behavior are indicated and the factors that precede it are considered. Special attention is paid to the relationship between occupational stress, emotions and counterproductive behavior at work, presenting the existing literature model of P. Spector and S. Fox on counterproductive behavior.

In the fourth chapter of the work, Dr. Gatsova's empirical study of occupational stress and counterproductive work behavior is presented in detail. At the end of the chapter, conclusions and recommendations are indicated as a result of the conducted research.

Dr. Victoria Gatsova clearly and accurately formulates the research thesis, namely that: "stress at work is a serious problem characterizing the modern working environment, which should not be underestimated by management, as it can lead to a number of harmful consequences, among which are counterproductive work behaviors'. The thesis is convincingly proven in the course of the theoretical-empirical study of the problem, which is logically developed in the four chapters of the monograph.

The applied methodology is a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. With the help of the qualitative analysis of the existing theoretical and empirical data in the specialized literature, the profile of the studied constructs was successfully outlined. The quantitative analysis is applied in connection with the research conducted by the author with a view to processing and analyzing the data collected by the researched persons.

A positive aspect of the monograph is the consideration of occupational stress and counterproductive work behavior on both a theoretical and empirical level. Each chapter ends with

clearly and precisely formulated conclusions that direct the reader's attention to the essence of the researched problems.

The empirical research conducted by Dr. Victoria Gatsova adds a high value to the work and enables the author to reach important conclusions, based on which to offer specific recommendations aimed at the managers of modern organizations. This also expresses the applied nature of work. There is a clear author's presence, which is especially evident in the interpretation of the obtained results.

To visualize the presented information, tables, graphs and figures have been prepared precisely, which help to systematize the theoretical and empirical data and facilitate their perception.

There is a good scientific and conceptual apparatus. The citation of the sources used in the text and in the bibliography is correct and has been done according to academic standards.

To achieve the goals and prove the formulated thesis, the author uses a rich and diverse specialized literature, which consists of 206 sources in Bulgarian and English, examining the problems of work stress and counterproductive work behaviors. Among them are current scientific studies from the last five years.

The main contributions of monographic work include:

1. An in-depth theoretical level study of workplace stress and counterproductive work behaviors.
2. Further development and upgrading of the problems of occupational stress and counterproductive work behaviors with empirical data obtained as a result of research conducted by Dr. Gatsova.
3. Investigating the relationship between the two research constructs and confirming P. Spector and S. Fox's existing model of counterproductive behavior.
4. Preparation of specific recommendations for successful management of occupational stress in organizations and counterproductive work behaviors that may arise as a result of toxic work environments dominated by high levels of stress.

Dr. Gatsova participates in the procedure with a second monograph on "Toxic leadership in the organization". The author examines toxic leadership in the organization, focusing on its nature, characteristics, types and consequences of its implementation. The topic chosen by the author is significant and relevant for modern organizations and society as a whole, because the dynamics of professional life create prerequisites for the emergence and development of conditions for toxic leadership, which leads to a number of negative and dangerous consequences, both for

organizations and for workers and employees. Therefore, it is reasonable to investigate effective coping with the destructive behavior patterns of the toxic leader.

A positive aspect of the monograph is the examination of the problem of toxic organizational leadership at both a theoretical and an empirical level. In addition, the study looks for the consequences and, as a counterweight, the ways to deal with the problem and the factors for effective management. Each chapter ends with clearly and precisely formulated conclusions that direct the reader's attention to the essence of the researched problems.

Presented and analyzed by Dr. Viktoria Gatsova, empirical data from research that testifies to the presence of toxic leadership in modern organizations, together with consideration and analysis of factors for effective management and justification of the need to apply constructive management models add high value to labor and enable the author to reach important conclusions, based on which to offer specific recommendations.

The professional analysis of the issue enables Dr. Gatsova to develop and present an author's model for dealing with toxic leadership in the organization based on the theoretical and empirical information presented in the work. This also expresses the applied nature of work.

The main contributions of this monographic work include:

1. In-depth research at the theoretical level of the problem of toxic organizational leadership, and systematization of scientific information for the purposes of monographic research.
2. Presentation and analysis by Dr. Gatsova of empirical data from studies that testify to the presence of toxic leadership in modern organizations.
3. Examining and analyzing factors for effective management that are opposite to toxic leadership and reveal the need to apply constructive management models aimed at reducing the influence of the manager's destructive behaviors.
4. Development of an author's model for dealing with toxic leadership in the organization based on the theoretical and empirical information presented in the work.

Based on the submitted documentation on the procedure of this competition I can make a reasonable assessment of the presence of a clear personal contribution of the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova in the relevant publications, and fully formulated contributions and results are her personal merit.

Based on the submitted information on the implementation of national minimum requirements according to the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for application of the Law, it can be concluded that the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova

meets the relevant criteria as follows: Group "A" - 50 points with a minimum of 50 points; group "B" - 100 points with a minimum of 100 points; group „D“ - 220 points with a minimum of 200 points; group "E" - 70 points with a minimum of 50 points.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

I do not have significant principled or formal critical remarks and recommendations to the scientific works and activities of the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova.

I can recommend Dr. Victoria Gatsova to have co-authored publications.

I would recommend Dr. Victoria Gatsova to prepare publications in English to publish in reputable publications.

I can recommend Dr. Victoria Gatsova to deepen her research in the field of issues related to leadership, effective management, financial results, work behavior, stress, organizational culture, corporate culture, etc. I am convinced that the author will contribute to the achievement of future scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the researched areas.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by the candidate **Dr. Victoria Svetlomirova Gatsova** meet all the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for application of the Law and the respective Regulations on the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia.

The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to academic work. The scientific and teaching qualification of the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova is undoubted.

The results achieved by the candidate Dr. Victoria Gatsova in teaching and research fully comply with the specific requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition, analysis of their importance and contained in them scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions, I find it reasonable to give my **positive assessment** and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic Council of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia **for election of Dr. Victoria Svetlomirova Gatsova to the academic position of 'Associate Professor'** at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia in the field of research 3.7. Administration and Management (Organizational Leadership and Psychological Aspects of Management).

22.11.2022

Reviewer:

(Professor, PhD Stanislav Dimitrov)